DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 176 913 RC 011 590

AUTHOR Christopherson, Victor A.; Dingle, Steven F.
TITLE Rural Navajo Youth: A Challenge for Resource Development. Arizona Agricultural Experiment Station Paper No. 284.
INSTITUTION Arizona Univ., Tucson. Agricultural Experiment Station.
PUB DATE 25 Aug 79
NOTE 33p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society (Burlington, Vermont, August 25, 1979)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS American Indian Education; *American Indians; *Cultural Background; Cultural Education; Disadvantaged Youth; Educational Disadvantagement; Educational Improvement; *Educational Needs; Employment Interviews; Employment Opportunities; Interpersonal Competence; Job Skills; Job Training; Parent Attitudes; Parent Influence; Reservations (Indian); Rural Youth; *Secondary Education; *Social Behavior; Unemployment; *Youth
IDENTIFIERS *Navajo (Tribe)

ABSTRACT

Caught between the Anglo and Navajo worlds, the Navajo youth of Arizona are at home in neither. Material rewards beckon from the Anglo world, but high schools have not provided the educational background to enable the youth to secure these rewards. Instead the schools have merely created in the students a discontent with traditional Reservation ways. Because they fit into neither culture, Navajo youths have created a "youth culture" of their own, complete with teenage gangs, alcohol, drug abuse, and venereal disease. Academic skills alone will not help these young people to better their economic opportunies; they must also have training in certain job related skills since behavioral traits common to the Navajo culture (e.g. downcast eyes before a stranger, lack of assertiveness, reluctance to take initiative, and seeming lack of ambition) place Navajo youth at a disadvantage in the aggressive Anglo job world. A proposed model 12 month high school with a large, highly trained professional staff would offer training that would prepare students for both of their worlds. Students would receive training in academic and vocational skills to help them secure and hold jobs, and courses in Navajo culture and tradition to assist them to gain insight and pride in their Navajo heritage. This report discusses the social competence of Navajo youth, their educational systems, parents' perceptions on raising children, the Navajo Way, economic considerations, and trends in government policy. (DS)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED176913

RURAL NAVAJO YOUTH: A CHALLENGE FOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

Victor A. Christopherson
and
Steven F. Dingle

The University of Arizona

Paper delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Rural Sociological Society, Burlington, Vermont August 25, 1979. Agricultural Experiment Station, Paper #284, The University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona.

RC 011590

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Victor A. Christopherson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

RURAL NAVAJO YOUTH:

A CHALLENGE FOR RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT*

by

Victor A. Christopherson

and

Steven F. Dingle

The University of Arizona

This paper was based upon data obtained in a Western Regional Project on the Development of Social Competence among Rural Youth. In Arizona the most critical population with regard to social competence among rural youth was judged to be the Native American youth on reservations. Of the several principal Native American groups -- the Navajo, Apache, Papago, and Hopi -- the Navajo was selected for the pragmatic reasons of access and cooperation on the part of tribal and B.I.A. officials. Many of the factors affecting social competence among Navajo youth, however, very likely obtain for the other groups as well.

The Navajo people, constituting one of the largest Native American tribes in North America, number approximately 200,000 individuals with an annual growth rate of 2.5 percent. Their federally allocated lands cover more than 24,000 square miles plus approximately 3,500,000 acres of Navajo-owned land near the Reservation. This land extends through the northeast corner of Arizona and the Four Corners area. Despite the size of the Reservation, there has been little economic or agricultural development since the Navajos were granted the lands in the 1880's. It has, in fact, been estimated that the Reservation in its current state of development could at best minimally support a population of 35,000 (Gilbreath, 1973). Such

---

*Acknowledgement is hereby made for the generous assistance of Mr. Steve Allman, Educational Specialist, Pupil Personnel Services, B.I.A. Chinle, AZ, with data collection and research access to the Navajo Reservation.

conditions force certain economic and social realities on Reservation inhabitants: poverty (the average Navajo per capita income in 1970 was 831 dollars), poor educational opportunities (most Navajos have not received more than a fifth-grade education), unemployment (unemployment statistics range from 43 to 66 percent), and social isolation (Gilbreath, 1973; Snachez, 1967; Ruffing, 1974).

Social Competence

In the generally understood sense, social competence implies the ability to function effectively within one's primary environment, and, also, the ability to adjust adaptively in an extended life space. White (1970) has considered competence in a sense that characterized the infant as a social and well-functioning organism from the beginning. Doll (1953) conceived of competence in terms of personal independence and social responsibility. Zigler as cited by Anderson and Messick (1974) defined social competence as:

> ...an individual's everyday effectiveness in dealing with his environment...his ability to master appropriate formal concepts, to perform well in school, to stay out of trouble with the law, and to relate well to adults and other children (p.283).

For purposes of the Regional project, social competence was defined as "That cluster of skills, abilities, and behavior through which an individual relates to other persons, groups and agencies or institutions." As applied to Navajo youth, there is the matter of assessing the quality of behavior in relation to the Reservation environment, and in relation

to the alternative, or expanded life space off the Reservation.

Acculturation among Navajo youth has not progressed sufficiently to enable them to function in a bi-cultural mode. Navajo youngsters appear to be in a state of transitional marginality. The principal but largely inaccessible source of material rewards is found in the Anglo culture. At the same time, they are no longer completely at ease with the "Navajo Way" or the traditional culture of the Reservation. The press of the Anglo world has contributed an insecurity about some of the Navajo beliefs without replacing the decrement with viable or necessarily available alternatives. The young Navajos appear to be responding by creating their own version of what Parsons (1949), Keniston (1968) and Erickson (1968) have termed the "youth culture". Adolescence has hit the Reservation. Parents, school, and B.I.A. officials have found the teen-age behavior difficult to understand and difficult to cope with. Teen-age gangs have formed, alcohol and drug abuse is epidemic -- as is venereal disease -- and general anomic behavior is becoming increasingly prevalent.

Navajo adolescence in some respects has pronounced dimorphic qualities. The females are more traditional in the sense they generally marry and settle down at an early age, many in their young teens. The males, on the other hand, do not manifest qualities of sociological adulthood until their very late twenties or early thirties. Until then, males typically defer marriage, maintain their peer-group orientations,

and have very little job stability (Office of Indian Education, Chinle, Arizona, 1978).

Navajo Education, B.I.A. Version

The school system, both B.I.A. and public, have the major responsibility for the acculturation of Navajo children. This is more of an implicit than explicit responsibility. The fact that the acculturation "take" generally falls short of the goal, i.e., to enable Navajo graduates to achieve a satisfactory quality of life both on and off the Reservation and to enable them to compete successfully in the off-Reservation labor market -- may have a number of implications both theoretical and practical. Without going into detail, it would be interesting to explore the critical or sensitive period hypothesis with regard to the apparent differential impacts of home versus school on socialization. Apparently the home registers with much greater impact. It is important to keep in mind that Navajo is spoken in most Navajo homes, and a student's first exposure to English may be the first grade of B.I.A. or public school.

Secondary education on the Reservation is a comparatively new undertaking. The B.I.A. high schools have been in operation approximately 12 years; consequently, they have grown somewhat like Topsy and the pieces are still being put together. It is not entirely fair to judge or characterize a complex institution in light of the short time span under consideration; however, there appears to be much room for improvement. The principal determining factor as to whether a child goes to a

public or B.I.A. school is that if the youngster lives within a mile and a half of a public school bus line, he or she will attend public school. If not, generally the school will be one of the B.I.A. schools. The data obtained from interviews and questionnaires all pertain to the parents and high school students of the Former Joint Use Area.[1] Because of the isolation in this geographical district, most all students attend B.I.A. high school at Many Farms or Tuba City, Arizona. Also, if the student is not up to grade, or if there is a discipline problem, the likelihood is that the school will be of the B.I.A. variety. None of the B.I.A. high schools on the Reservation is accredited at this time.

> The program at Many Farms High School can be illustrated in terms of its failure to meet students' personal, emotional, social, and academic needs as evidenced by the following figures based primarily on data from 1970-72:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Major fighting incidents | 101 |
> | Removal from school | 311 |
> | Breaking and entering | 54 |
> | Stealing (major) | 141 |
> | AWOL | 1807[2] |
> | Major drinking | 1581 |
> | Jail | 178 |
>
> Forty percent of the students fall below the fourth-grade level in reading, and about 20 percent are at the sixth-grade level. Approximately 429 students are absent an excessive number of days per year. Approximately 60 percent of entering students fail to graduate (p.63).
>
> Seventy-two percent of the twelfth-grade students enrolled at Many Farms High School for School Year 1978-79 scored at the first to tenth percentile on Total Reading, Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills, Level 4, in September 1978. The 4 percent with the highest score ranked in the 41st to 56th percentile. Such scores indicate that curriculum and instructional approaches have not been developed which would place students in a "can-do" position in their

> academic studies, or one that would motivate them to try to learn. The previous data would indicate that the effect, over the three year period, of such imputed disability on individual student self-concept, and on his understanding of what a high school education could be, has not been considered, nor appropriate individual educational adjustment effected. Testing in this context becomes rejection, ascribing failure to the individual student and placing responsibility for his plight only upon him.
>
> Ninety-five students who would be twelfth graders during School Year 1978-79 and who were tested at Many Farms High School in School Years 1976-77 and/or 1977-78 failed to enroll at Many Farms High School for the current school year (B.I.A., Navajo Area Office, Window Rock, Arizona, 1978).

Melville (1966) compared Navajo and non-Navajo students with respect to mental ability, reading ability, anxiety level, self-concept and achievement motivation. Navajo students scored lower on all comparisons but anxiety level. Anxiety is a commonly observed characteristic of the Navajo (Kluckhohn and Leighton, 1962), and is likely to be of complex origin. Two causes are thought to be their belief in witchcraft, which can be a cause for almost anything going wrong in their lives, and the uncertainties of making a living in a difficult environment with the technological means at their disposal (Kluckhohn and Leighton, 1962). Noting that the Navajo student's motivation to achieve in school is significantly lower than that of non-Navajos (.01), Melville (1966) suggests that the cause may be related to the lack of material reward in the system. The non-Navajo, on the other hand, is thought to be motivated by grades and praise from parents and/or teachers.

A number of studies have been made of the occupational and status aspirations of Navajo youth (Stout, 1976; Despain, 1965; Reboussin and Goldstein, 1966). Often such studies are content to report percentages and comparisons with other ethnic groups. Stout (1976) for example offers sex and ethnic comparisons between Navajo, rural White, and Black youth with regard to occupation and status aspirations. He reports that occupational and educational aspirations were generally high among Navajo youth -- slightly lower than for Whites,and about the same as for Blacks -- and with little deflection expected.

It seems reasonable to suppose that with moderate access to the media and some exposure in school to occupational concepts and their variety, Navajo youth would be inclined to designate advantageous and high status positions for their future. The possibility that deflection is seriously underestimated in reports of aspiration studies would seem to be confirmed by the track record both in education and occupation of post-high school Navajo youth. In fact, in light of the paucity of occupational counseling and training programs available at the B.I.A. secondary school in Many Farms, Arizona, studies concerned with occupational and status aspirations may amount to little more than exercises in data collection and analysis.

Anderson and Safer (1967) suggest that their findings concerning educational achievement of Indian youngsters in the Southwest are similar to those of Martin and Deutsch in New York. They cite Deutsch

as follows:

> ...The frustration inherent in not understanding, not succeeding, and not being stimulated in school, although being regulated by it, creates a basis for further development of negative self-images and low evaluations of individual competencies...No matter how the parents might aspire to a higher achievement level for their child, their lack of knowledge as to the operational implementation, combined with the child's early failure experiences in school, can so effectively attenuate confidence in his ability to handle competently challenge in the academic area that the child loses all motivation.

Collier (1972:58) calls attention to what is described in the jargon of educational psychology as "failure orientation" in the B.I.A. schools. Such an orientation is the result, according to Collier, of the low regard in which Indian children and their culture are held. He states "...up to 70 percent (of teachers) leave the B.I.A. school after one year." Larson, in a study of the operation of the self-fulfilling prophecy in Native-Indian education, asked successful teachers of English, Math and Physical Education what the reaction of a new teacher would be to Indian students. The response was "They will be shocked, disappointed, confused, and saddened." Larson's study dealt with Indian education in general rather than specifically with the B.I.A. schools.

In short, while the final word has yet to be recorded, the B.I.A. High Schools, and probably Indian education in general, have fallen short preparing students to enjoy the best of both worlds. More to the point, they have succeeded in doing little more than producing a quality of marginality in the students that leaves them discontent with the old way, but does not provide the acculturational status to facilitate adjustment to the new.

Parent Perceptions

The individual as a product of socialization has been subject to many forces shaping his development. Perhaps the most significant ones take place within the primary group of the family in which the parents play the major role. Parents have both conscious and unconscious child-rearing goals; consequently, the child is subject to both deliberate and unwitting socialization processes. The conscious processess are those generally sanctioned by the culture, and consequently, in the parents' view lead to desired qualities. In the attempt to find out the specific nature of the child-rearing practices and the qualities associated with competence in the parent's perception, 208 interviews were conducted with Navajo parents in the Former Joint Use Area during the spring and summer of 1978. Navajo interviewers were used. Only a brief portion of the data is summarized below.

School is seen by Navajo parents as being important to their children. Sixty percent felt that their children should go to college, with 20 percent of these indicating college graduation as the goal. The actual expectation of college for their offspring was less optimistic. Forty-six percent indicated that they expected their children to go to college. Thirty-seven percent expected their children to finish high school only. Despite this emphasis on education, thirty-six percent of the parents felt that school was not currently preparing the students for employment. Forty-four percent thought that the schools were doing

an adequate job and the remainder did not know or express hope that their youngsters would learn something worthwhile.

When asked what they thought the main fault of parents was in raising children nowadays, the most frequent answeres were: insufficient communication between parents and children (38%), poor treatment of the children (20%), and too little guidance being given to children in the home (18%). Additional responses indicated that parents were too harsh on their children either using physical punishment or verbal lashings. (Children, in fact, really listen only when parents talk softly and seriously. Children believe that raised voices convey little of importance, Peter Todechini, 21-year-old Navajo.) An interesting side-light is that twelve percent of the parents indicated that the fault lay totally with the children whom they saw as being unruly, disrespectful, and unwilling to listen to their elders. Such a de-localization of blame seems to run through both the students' and the parents' responses.

Some of the problems that make raising children difficult were seen as: financial stress, school-related problems such as drinking, going AWOL, poor teaching, and getting in other kinds of trouble at school. Additional concerns were parental drinking, poor homelife and the behavior of children toward the parents, principally disrespect and disobedience.

When asked what kinds of behavior on the part of the child would be pleasing, the responses in order of their frequency were: for the child to help around the home with indoor chores (74%); various outdoor tasks such as hauling wood and water and care of livestock (37%); helping grandparents with grocery shopping; herding sheep; cleaning their house (19%); finishing and doing well in school (16%). As a reward for such behavior parents would say "Thank you" in some way, be proud, and/or would reward the child with money, food, or a trip to town. (These responses may indicate a kind of situational response posture. Navajos, in fact, seldom say "thanks". Such apparent disregard for social amenities is often a "put-off" to the Anglo observer. The Navajos, on the other hand, will express their thanks by returning a favor or performing a service at some appropriate time.)

The parent responses with regard to identifying behavior of an undesirable kind were: drinking (70%), misbehavior (39%), causing trouble at school (35%), disrespect towards their elders (21%), drug use (17%), and other miscellaneous behavior such as marital difficulties, going AWOL and sex deliquency. (Interestingly, the Navajo parents' and high school students' opinion as to the cause of such behavior, was primarily the bad influence of other people. The attribution of cause to the bad influence of companions appeared with such a degree of regularity in the responses of both parents and students, that its derivative is very likely to part of the Navajo traditional belief system).

Other causes of "bad behavior" were Reservation activities such as the rodeo[3], dances, lack of guidance at school and home, and parents who showed too little love, trust, and attention.

Parental practices with regard to discipline or correcting undesirable behavior are frequently a central concern in discussions of socialization. In an attempt to ascertain the Navajo approach to discipline, the question was asked "What would you do if your child did the following things (items supplied by Navajo consultants): behaved badly at a cermony, lost a sheep, used alcohol or drugs, and showed disrespect to parents?" In each case the most frequent response was "talk to them". Another even more powerful source of discipline was to have the grandparents talk to the offender. The question concerning the "lost sheep" produced an additional interesting response, i.e., over 60% said they would help the child look for the sheep. Several parents volunteered the information that most sheep were easy to find.

The alcohol and drug use behavior produced two frequent responses in addition to the "talk to them" approach. One was explaining the danger of the drugs and alcohol -- which is a form of talk -- and 10 parents of the population sample indicated that such behavior was the child's own choice. When punishment was mentioned, often the statement made clear that the intention was not physical punishment.

The responses indicated very clearly that the traditional Navajo method of discipline and correction is talk and teaching. Talk includes

mainly advice and, if needed, shaming elements to which Navajos are very sensitive. Leighton and Kluckhohn (1947:53) put the matter in an appropriate cultural context. They write:

> It is interesting to note in autobiographies that old men and women will often attribute their survival, happiness, or sucess to having followed the advice of their parents. They seldom say 'I got along all right because I obeyed my parents!' There is a difference."

The parents identified the most important things they learned when children as: Care of livestock, household chores and handicrafts, outdoor chores, and traditional culture (roles, cermonies, and the Navajo way). The parents believed that while such things were still important, there had been a change! "Children don't care anymore" or "such things don't apply anymore in the modern world".

One of the final open-ended questions asked of parents was whether it was more important for children to be taught to obey their parents or to think for themselves even though they may do things the parents do not like. More than half (55%) indicated that both alternatives were desirable. About a third stated that since elders knew more, the child should be taught to follow the advice of elders. The rest indicated that children should be taught to think for themselves and that learning comes through making mistakes (about 10%).

The inferred parental concept of competence, as qualities to be encouraged in children, could be illustrated, at least in part, by an individual who is well grounded in the traditional Navajo way, and

who also is able to learn in school how to obtain a good job with which to support his family. These two competencies illustrate both the old and new; however, the Navajo way is an entire cultural system which includes a great many elements. Some of them are respect for elders such as deference patterns and willingness to take advice and to listen to what they say; acquisition of material goods (Hobson, 1954); a willingness to share, particularly with friends and family; belief and trust in the supernatural and magic; appropriate and responsible behavior as regards relationships with the opposite sex; use of alcohol and drugs; and a strong orientation toward the family. Family in the Navajo sense includes the extended family as well as the nuclear, and in fact, extends to all relatives and even to what Kluckhohn and Leighton (1962) refer to as the "outfit".[4] The "outfit" is a group of relatives larger than the extended family who regularly cooperate for certain purposes. An "outfit" may include up to two hundred individuals or more, and may occupy an area from 12,000 to 80,000 acres.

This, of course, is a much abbreviated and simplified characterization. From the vantage point of one outside the Navajo culture, the traditional Navajo model of competence may well be antithetical to the attainment of the modern adaptive model, i.e., that of learning successfully in school and obtaining a good job.

The Navajo Way

Even though some time has passed since Kluckhohn and Leighton wrote their books on the Navajo, they are still considered the standard works.[5] Most all the traditional behavior and values discussed by Kluckhohn and Leighton are still in evidence. The change has occured principally, as might be expected, in the youth generation as a result of the impact of acculturation influences on their lives. Obviously no serious attempt could be made in a paper of this kind to portray the Navajo culture in any sort of adequate fashion. At the same time, there are a few well-known qualities and/or characteristics that have a bearing on their adaptation to both Reservation and off-Reservation life. Some of these qualities were gleaned from the available literature, some from interviews with Navajos and with Anglo B.I.A. officials, and some from observation on the Reservation. No single caveat would be adequate to qualify all contingencies; consequently, the concept of "more-or-less" should remain mentally affixed as the brief discussion progresses.

Casteneda's book title. A Separate Reality, could scarcely be improved upon when considering the world of the Navajos. Theirs is one largely controlled by the supernatural -- holy beings, ghosts, witches, and powers -- some of the supernatural forces are benevolent, and some malevolent. There are many taboos to be observed, and there are many cause-and-effect assumptions made about a very broad spectrum of events. Kluckhohn and Leighton (1962) convey a good idea of the wealth of what

Anglos might call subjective or non-empirical knowledge which daily influences Navajo behavior. On the other hand,many of their beliefs can be supported with what they believe to be very obvious evidence. Leighton and Kluckhohn (1947) cite A.I. Hallowell in offering a valuable persepctive on this aspect of Navajo orientation.

> ...Psychologically, the actual order or reality in which human beings live is constituted in large measure by the traditional concepts and beliefs that are held....Indians are able to point out plenty of tangible evidence that supports the interpretation of the realities that their culture imposes upon their minds.

The behavior of Navajos, like that of most people, appears quite logical once its basis is discerned. There is a real question, however, as to whether one not having been reared as a Navajo could ever manage to grasp the entire world view as seen by the Navajo. For the most part we settle for bits and pieces.

Leighton and Kluckhohn (1947) write:

> Navajos are moody. Their feelings run the gamet from bubbling jocularity to despair, from inert apathy to destructive violence within quite a brief space of time. The distance from laughter to tears is often a short one. They are impulsive rather than spontaneous. Few Navajos indeed are capable of sustained personal autonomy; they are too responsive to the pressure of public opinion. Their outer and inner lives are too seldom firmly integrated. They have often achieved a measure of self-control under many conditions which will deceive the casual white observer, who would be astonished to see these apparently well-disciplined adults burst easily into tears of homesickness or give vent to violent rages on slight provocation (p.111).

The Navajo, in Rieseman's terms, is other directed. The opinions

of others are instrumental in controlling behavior. Shame -- "...the agony of being found wanting and exposed to the disapproval of others" is an important mechanism for both discipline and behavioral impetus. According to Anglo standards, Navajo children appear shy. They stand with downcast eyes and do not "speak up" when addressed. As a case in point, a Navajo youth was recently invited to come from the Reservation to Tucson for a job interview for which he was well qualified. He was not hired. Upon subsequent investigation, the interviewer had "seen" a shy young man who answered only "yes" and "no" to all inquiries, volunteered no information about himself related to job requirements, and had a limp "dead fish" handshake. A Navajo interviewer would have known that for a Navajo youth to look directly into the eyes of an adult stranger would have been a sign of disrespect. To have given a firm handshake would have been an intrusion upon the self of the other and would have been in poor taste. Also, Navajo people often have a hesitancy in speaking before Anglos for a number of reasons -- their own accents, fear of ridicule, feelings of inferiority in such situations and other similar reasons. Their reluctance to take initiative -- initiative is a quality prized by Anglo employers --, their apprently casual time and space orientation, and their seeming lack of ambition, all raise doubts in the minds of off-Reservation employers. The last quality, the apparent lack of ambition, might be according to Leighton and Kluckhohn (1947), an expression of their fear of supernatural sanctions against those who ask for or try to get too much. Safety is more important than risk

even though the rewards may be greater for the latter. These few qualities, and there are many more, may illustrate that moving off the Reservation is a good deal more than simple geographical re-location. Social engineering in the interest of Navajo acculturation has been sadly lacking, and the near future bodes little about which to be optimistic. Traditionally, Americans have looked to education as a means of socialization and the basis for vertical mobility. The kind of education provided for Navajos seems to have fallen somewhat short.

Among Anglo Americans, the competence model is largely predicated on the ability to be able to sell oneself. The Navajo likely would consider the degree of assertiveness necessary to do this in extremely poor taste. Bane and Jencks (1972:41) point out that the ability to influence others is one of the important ingredients in attaining higher incomes. Bane and Jencks also suggest that the character of a school's output depends more than anything else on a single input, namely, the characteristics of the entering child. The skills, attitudes, and abilities of the entering child are more influential than any one or a combination of such things as the school budget, its policies, the characteristics of the teachers, and its interventional programs, which Bane and Jencks contend, are either secondary or completely irrelevant. These conclusions come out of the Center for Educational Policy Research at Harvard University, and were based on data gathered by the Equality of Educational Opportunity Survey.

Assuming there is some validity in the research report from Harvard,

we are left to consider several possibilities. One is that the B.I.A. schools are sc different that the Harvard interpretation could not be generalizable to such schools. Another is that the entering child is so far removed from the level of academic readiness for school work that the possible sensitive period for maximum interventional impact has been passed over. The suggestion that the critical input concerning the school's products is the entering child, suggests that remedial intervention during the school years may be too late. The family, as the mediator of culture, the halfway station between the individual and culture, may represent the ideal target for intervention. Intervention in the Navajo family context, however, would present such logistical and ideological problems that for all practical purposes, it is not a viable option.

A third view is simply that the conslusions of Bane and Jencks are in error, and that intervention by non-family agencies, principally the school, is both an important and a promising model for competence building. Based on this last assumption, an alternative model will be presented below.

Economic Considerations

According to a B.I.A. Manpower Survey (1970), there is "...no real choice left for the Navajos. Their growing population and restricted land base place limits on the agriculture opportunities available to them." The notion of a "restricted land base" may seem peculiar in light of the more than 24,000 square miles comprising the

Reservation. There is no shortage of land per se. There is, however, a water problem that effectively limits the agricultural potential. Of equal importance is the fact that the Navajo land-use system is an instrumental constraint. There have been no new grazing permits since the 1930's. The permits, issued to Navajo women, constitute "customary use areas" which pass on to someone in the family -- usually the oldest daughter. These "use areas" are not generally broken up into smaller parcels. While progeny will either leave the area or live on the grandmother's land, or use area, the land is increasingly inadequate to support the expanding population base. Those who leave the area still think of home in terms of where their mothers' home are, and their mothers' home are generally where the grandmother lives or lived. Many return and many stay. The net result, the large Reservation area notwithstanding, is a genuine land shortage for agricultural and grazing purposes.

That the Federal Government has the capacity to provide the necessary number of jobs is suggested by Johnson (1972). She estimates that material poverty could be ameliorated with the provision of about 40,000 jobs for rural Native Americans. Considering the fact that civilian employment has increased at a rate of about 1,000,000 jobs a year in the last decade, and also considering the economic capacity of our nation, it would appear that poverty among the rural American Indians is more a source of annoyance and embarrassment than a potentially serious economic drain on the economy.

In 1970, the per capita income for the Navajo was $831. as compared with $3,331. for Arizona (Gilbreath, 1973).[6] Such a figure suggests both the skills and the opportunities are in short supply.

> Many of the Navajos' economic problems relate to the strong depedence of the Reservation economy on agriculture and a few modest extractive industries. The economy does not have a significant manufacturing sector or an adequately developed business community. These factors, coupled to a rapidly growing population and a relatively unproductive land base contribute to the inability of the Reservation to support its population adequately (Gilbreath, 1973).

The jobs on the Reservation come largely from the following sources: The Navajo Tribe, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and the Public Health Service. These sources provide approximately 70 percent of all Reservation jobs. In addition, the other job sources are the Office of Economic Opportunity, the public schools, occasional contract jobs, sheep herding, the Peabody Coal Co., the Navajo Forest Products Industry, miscellaneous service jobs, and the Navajo Tribe Utility Authority. Included in the last item are several power projects. Altogether, these employers account for approximately 30 percent of the employed Navajos. Approximately another third are unemployed at any given time (Office of Indian Education B.I.A., Chinle, Arizona, March 1979). Of those who seek employment in off-Reservation settings, approximately 30 percent remain more than five years, and the others return to the Reservation to seek employment there. A number of these remain chronically unemployed. In short, both the self-determination policy and the termination concept, or the virtual withdrawal of Federal subsidy, have the

problem of adequate employment left unsolved. With regard to the development of further employment opportunities on the Reservation, a possibility exists. There are, in fact, a few potential employment opportunities emerging.

One such possibility is the energy development field adjacent to the Reservation in the so-called Checkerboard Area in New Mexico. As many as 80,000 jobs are anticipated in the next few years. There are few indications, however, that Navajo workers will qualify for any appreciable number of the jobs. The jobs are anticipated in hydrology, engineering, construction and related technical fields. Neither the B.I.A. or the Tribe are doing much to prepare for this potential opportunity. There has been to date little, if any, coordination with political entities and there has been no specific training in preparation for the jobs.

The present occupational training programs is implemented by the Career Development Branch of the B.I.A. which continues to provide film strips shown by para-professionals -- some with less than a bachelor degree education -- and with virtually no discussion or interpretation offered.

Another example of wasted potential is the Navajo Irrigation Project on the San Juan river east of Farmington, New Mexico. The purpose of the Project was to provide water for the development and allocation of farm land. So far, there has been no related career planning, and there is reported to have been a mysterious "loss" of

heavy equipment amounting to several millions of dollars (B.I.A. official, Chinle, Arizona 1979). There seems to be little in the Reservation framework to attract large investors with the exception of the Government, and even here disenchantment appears to be setting in.

Trends in Government Policy

World War II marked the beginning of an era of rapid social and technological change. The larger society as well as many sub-cultures were affected. Among the Navajo Indians, the impact of such change took the form of increased migration from the Reservation, an increased emphasis on education, a surge of awareness that the goods and services of society were unequally apportioned, and the gradual emergence of the concept of the individual and collective right to express frustration, and to attempt to have more voice in matters that affect one's welfare (Vogt, 1951). Paternalism was being challenged, and the political expediency of calling attention to the "plight" of the Reservation Indians was not overlooked by Washington. A series of nebulous and protean proposals issued forth from Congress and agency officials. The Bureau of Indian Affairs had difficulty responding to such challenges and their policies and programs were not always well-geared to the problems they addressed. At the same time, the size of the Navajo Tribe and the land area of the Reservation, resulted in critical problems of both isolation and insulation. Much of the Indian legislation appeared to be "pro-forma" and futile in relation to the magnitude of the problems being

addressed. Nevertheless, Indian legislation continued to "ride high" seemingly until a series of embarassing events occured having to do with such matters as the fishing rights and land claims of Native Americans in Maine, and water, land, and resource claims elsewhere. Indians to be helped "way out there" is one thing. Having them and their problems crop up in one's own backyard, may well be another.

Indians had become a vigorous voice, and "liberals" appeared to shift their attention to other issues. The present mood of Congress with regard to Native Americans might be characterized as supporting policy reflecting something between self-determination and termination. Benefits are being cut down and Congress is attempting to decentralize by funding each B.I.A. school rather than the entire Tribe in compliance with P.L. 561.[7] Last year, 1978, for example, the funding has been cut from 14 million to about 8 million. Another 10 percent budget cut is anticipated next year. In 1979, a 10-15 percent reduction in work force will be implemented. Such a cut will likely have a snow-balling effect in that there will be greater competition for jobs outside the provisions of the B.I.A.

It is entirely possible to adopt a logical position with regard to either the Federal view or the view from the Reservation. The Congressional perspective may well be that considering the apparent inefficiency of B.I.A. programs (Collier, 1972) it is futile to maintain or increase the funding level of the recent past. From the B.I.A.

perspective, if the job couldn't be done with the recent funding provisions, there seem little reason to be optimistic over the likelihood of developing successful programs with less.

In spite of the obvious shortcomings of the B.I.A., it is not all bad. In fact, as Collier (1972) points out,

> Over the last two decades, the Indian has learned that he must fear most those who want to eliminate the Bureau of Indian Affairs and who make...statements about it being time 'for this country to get out of the Indian business....' Their federal trust status guarantees their Indian-ness, and if it is terminated, they know there will nothing left to mismanage.

Admittedly such a brief and impressionistic analysis is simplistic. Assuming, however, that the characterization is more-or-less correct, where is the trend leading? The so-called "bottom line" comes down to obtaining an adequate income for each Navajo to maintain a reasonable quality of life. The means to such a goal are acquiring marketable skills and having opportunities to employ such skills. There is a long way to go in the attainment of both elements.

A Modest Proposal

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is a massive bureaucratic structure where individual initiative and creativity is vulnerable to the maintenance of the status quo, and perhaps, political expediency. Nevertheless, the B.I.A. has its share of very capable individuals, one of whom recently designed a model of educational intervention that bodes considerable promise. As of this date, the plan is thought to have a

reasonably good chance of being implemented. The model is built around the concept that meaningful intervention needs to have an impact in virtually all areas of life. The model is designed accordingly.

The site is a conference center facility close to the Arizona border at Continental Divide, New Mexico. The facility will accomodate 300 youngsters and staff. There would be one professional for every eight Indian high school students. Two-hundred students would be referred from some B.I.A. school as students with some sort of social or emotional disorder. One hundred would come on the basis of their own preference. The school would run 12 months during the year; thus any student could graduate in three years assuming all went well.

Each professional would have a masters degree in a relevant field as a minimum educational requirement. The adult would act as parent surrogate, a counselor, a teacher, and as a general model for behavior, language, work attitudes and so forth. The professional and the student would work together to present to the faculty directors a contract of commitment concerning curriculum, occupational goals, behavior, educational goals, and a general plan for the several years in attendance at the school. When not in class, the students would be required to work at some job around the Center. They would receive training in work performance, interviewing, and other job skills needed to compete successfully off the Reservation. Their graduation would be achievement based. The training would be intensive, but would be related insofar as possible to real and existing conditions as they are found

off the Reservation. The program would not attempt to re-fashion the cultural orientation of the students, but rather attempt to help them make meaningful choices and develop the skills to implement them. There would be courses in Navajo culture and tradition geared to generate insight and build pride in the Navajo heritage.

This proposed model is not an idle dream, but a realistic intervention plan that is close to being implemented. If it is given a chance, it just might work, and if it does, the way might be charted to realize the latent potential of Navajo youth.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The Joint Use Area was estiblished by President Chester A. Arthur in 1882 as an area in north central Arizona to be used by Hopi and other Indians, principally Navajos. In 1974 the United States Congress passed the Navajo-Hopi Land Dispute Settlement Act which gave the Federal Courts power to settle the dispute by drawing a partition line establishing new boundaries for the Hopi and Navajo reservations. On February 10, 1977 U.S. District Judge Walsh ordered the 1.8 million acre area split between the two tribes by a partition line which gave each tribe 900,000 acres of the disputed area. The Hopi Reservation was doubled in size and the Navajo Reservation was reduced by four percent. Thirty-two Hopis and 3,495 Navajos were designated to be relocated.

[2]An interesting aspect of the AWOL cases at Many Farms High School is that most of them involve females. Of the AWOL females, the great majority are high school freshman. After the girls get to the junior and senior years, the number who leave school in an unauthorized fashion greatly diminishes. As many as a dozen may be AWOL at any given time, and a small fleet of B.I.A. trucks are kept busy retrieving the run-aways.

[3]The rodeo has come to have great significance among the Navajos. Downs (1972:275-290) offers one interpretation of this phenomenon.

[4]The "outfit" as described by Kluckhohn and Leighton (1962) may not be a functional social unit at the present time. None of the B.I.A. officials in the Chinle agency had seen any firsthand evidence in recent times of its existence.

[5]Kluckhohn, Clyde and Dorothea Leighton. The Navajo, Revised Edition. New York: The American Museum of Natural History, 1962.

Leighton, Dorothea and Clyde Kluckhohn. Children of the People. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1947.

[6]This figure is slightly below that provided by the Former Joint Use Area Needs Assessment Report, 1978.

[7]Public Law 561 provides for the following:

a) It establishes direct funding from the Washington central office to individual schools rather than to B.I.A. area offices.
b) The school boards and the principals develop a statement of need for each school which serves as a basis for fund allocation
c) The school boards will control school policy and assume responsibility for personnel decisions. Each school will recruit rather than rely on a central recruiting system.

(The Navajo Tribe is opposed to PL 561 because it erodes their political influence and threatens the security established under the social security system.)

REFERENCES

Anderson, James G. and Dwight Safer

1967 "The Influence of Differential Community Perceptions on the Provision of Equal Educational Opportunities", Sociology of Education, (Summer) 219-230.

Anderson, Scarvia and Samuel Messick

1974 "Social Competency in Young Children", Developmental Psychology, 10(2) 282-293.

Bane, Mary Jo and Christopher Jencks

1972 "The Schools and Equal Opportunity", Saturday Review/Education, (September) 41.

Bureau of Indian Affairs

1970 Navajo Manpower Survey (Unpublished manuscript).

Bureau of Indian Affairs

1978 Former Joint Use Area Needs Assessment Report. Window Rock, Arizona: Navajo Area Office. Pp. 62-64.

Collier, Peter

1972 "The Red Man's Burden", in Bahr, Chadwick and Day (eds) Native Americans Today: Sociological Perspectives. New York: Harper and Row. Pp. 52-67.

Despain, Charles Ward Jr.

1965 "Analysis of Male Navajo Student's Perception of Occupational Opportunities and Their Attitudes Toward Development of Skills and Traits Necessary for Occupational Competence." Pullman: Washington State University.

Doll, Edgar A.

1953 The Measurement of Social Competence. Minneapolis: Educational Publishers, Inc.

Downs, James F.

1972 "The Cowboy and the Lady: Models as a Determinant of the Rate of Acculturation Among the Pinon Navajo", in Bahr, Chadwick and Day (eds) Native Americans Today: Sociological Perspectives. New York: Harper and Row. Pp. 275-290.

Erikson, Erik H.

1968 Identity, Youth and Crisis. New York: W.W. Norton.

Gilbreath, Kent

1973 Red Capitalism: An Analysis of the Navajo Economy. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press.

Hobson, Richard

1954 Navajo Acquisitive Values. Cambridge: Harvard University Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Ethnology.

Johnson, Helen W.

1972 "Rural Indian Americans in Poverty", in Bahr, Chadwick and Day (eds) Native Americans Today: Sociological Perspectives. New York: Harper and Row. Pp. 24-30.

Keniston, Kenneth

1968 Young Radicals: Notes on Committed Youth. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

Kluckhohn, Clyde and Dorothea Leighton

1962 The Navajo. Garden City: Doubleday and Company.

Larson, Wayne L.

1977 Pygmalion in Native-Indian Education. Montana State University: Department of Sociology, Unpublished paper.

Leighton, Dorothea and Clyde Kluckhohn

1947 Children of the People: The Navajo Individual and His Development. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Melville, Robert S.

1966 "What are the Factors which Enhance or Retard Educational Achievement of Navajo Indian Students in the Sevier School District?" Utah State University: Ed.D. Dissertation.

Personal Communication

1979 Office of Indian Education, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Chinle, Arizona.

Parsons, Talcott

1949 "Age and Sex in the Social Structure", in, Parsons, Talcott Essays in Social Theory. Glencoe: The Free Press. Pp. 128-232.

Reboussin, R. and J.W. Goldstein

1966 "Achievement Motivation in Navajo and White Students", American Anthropologist 68: 740-744.

Stout, L.

1976 "Navajo Adolescents' Projections of Status Achievement: Occupation, Education, Size of Family, Size of Income, and Place of Residence: A Tri-Ethnic Comparison". New Mexico State University: Ed.D. Dissertation.

Vogt, E.Z.

1951 Navajo Veterans. Cambridge: Harvard University Peabody Museum Press.

White, Burton L.

1979 Human Infants: Experience Psychological Development. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall.